

Remarks/Arguments

No claims have been canceled or amended by this response. Claims 1-3, 9 and 14 are pending in this application.

Claims 1, 3 and 14 stand rejected under 102(e) as being anticipated by Leon (Provisional Application 60/165,885). Claims 2 and 9 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Leon in view of Ananda (US 6,385,731). Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Claim 1 recites a method for a vendor to dispense postage over a network to a remote personal computer that comprises "obtaining, by the vendor, a meter license from a postal service, said meter license being associated with a meter account assigned to the vendor, said meter account being maintained at a data center; receiving, via the network, a transaction request for postage from a customer using the remote personal computer, the customer not having a meter license from the postal service, said transaction request including information from the customer, said information corresponding to the transaction requested and payment method; processing the requested transaction by requesting the data center to create evidence of postage payment and to account for the created evidence of postage payment in the meter account assigned to the vendor; effecting payment for the transaction based on the information received from the customer; receiving the evidence of postage payment created by the data center; and sending the evidence of postage payment to the remote personal computer for use by the customer, where the customer can obtain postage from the vendor without having a meter license from the postal service." Thus, a mailer (customer) can print postage utilizing a meter account assigned to the vendor, and therefore the customer does not require a separate meter license or meter account.

Leon is directed to methods and apparatus for dispensing postage. As stated in Leon, "A specific embodiment of the present invention provides a system and method

that allows a single, common account, with a single postal license, to cover multiple products.” (Page 3, lines 7-10, emphasis added). As described in Leon, three products are shown as examples. These three products include an internet-based postage metering service wherein a postal secure device is resident in the service company’s server, a local postage metering system, wherein a PSD is provided to the consumer, and a local postage metering system wherein a PSD is supplied together with a dedicated postal printer.

The Office Action contends that Leon teaches the limitations of a meter license being associated with a meter account assigned to the vendor, and dispensing postage in response to a transaction request received by a postage meter vendor over the Internet from a customer that includes “processing the requested transaction by creating evidence of postage payment” and “accounting for the created evidence of postage payment in the meter account assigned to the postage meter vendor” as is recited in claim 1. Applicants respectfully disagree.

As specifically stated in Leon, the consumer can install a single software application on his/her computer that includes all of the functionality of the three existing applications. “This new single application takes advantage of the commonality of hardware and software that exists, allowing it to be administered by the service company with a single account, and by the postal authorities with a single license.” (Page 6, lines 19-25, emphasis added).

Table 1 provided on page 7 of Leon (reproduced below) summarizes the possible combinations and corresponding consumer requirements for each of the products. As can be clearly seen from the bottom row of this table, each of the options requires the consumer to obtain a postal license.

Consumer Requirements	<u>OPTION 1</u>	<u>OPTION 2</u>	<u>OPTION 3</u>
Computer with modem	♦	♦	♦
General Purpose Digital Printer	♦	♦	
PSD		♦	♦
Postal License	♦	♦	♦

Table 1: Matrix, Showing Commonality Of Elements

The Office Action contends that Page 7, lines 23-25 of Leon, which states that Options 2 and 3 require a license from the postal authorities, can be interpreted as meaning that Option 1 does not require a postal license. Applicants respectfully disagree. Note first that this statement in Leon does not state that Option 1 does not require a postal license. Furthermore, as clearly indicated by Table 1 of Leon, Option 1 does require the consumer to obtain a postal license. Additionally, as further stated starting on line 25 of page 7 and continuing to line 2 of page 8, “Specific embodiments exploit the commonality of the hardware and software elements of the different products to try to minimize the burden that these administrative requirements put on the consumer; only one account with the supplier, and only one postal license, is required to use any or all of the three products. The same account and license can be maintained if the consumer changes his/her choice of products.” (Emphasis added).

Thus, Table 1 of Leon clearly indicates that the consumer is required to obtain a postal license to use any of the products. The statements on page 3, lines 7-10; page 6, lines 19-25; and page 7, line 2 through page 8, line 2, also clearly indicate that the consumer is required to obtain a postal license to use any of the products (which includes the Option 1 product).

There is simply no disclosure, teaching or suggestion in Leon of a vendor obtaining a meter license from a postal service that is associated with a meter account assigned to the vendor, as the consumer in Leon is clearly required to obtain a postal license to use any of the products described in Leon. Furthermore, there is no disclosure, teaching or suggestion in Leon of dispensing postage in response to a transaction request received by a postage meter vendor over the Internet from a customer that includes "processing the requested transaction by creating evidence of postage payment" and "accounting for the created evidence of postage payment in the meter account assigned to the postage meter vendor" as is recited in claim 1.

For at least the above reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 1 is allowable over the prior art of record. Claim 3, dependent upon claim 1, is allowable along with claim 1 and on their own merits. The reference to Ananda does not cure any of the above deficiencies, as it was relied upon for other features. Claims 2 and 9, dependent upon claim 1, are allowable along with claim 1 and on their own merits.

Claim 14 includes limitations substantially similar to claim 1. For the same reasons given with respect to claim 1 above, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 14 is allowable over the prior art of record.

In view of the foregoing remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the claims of this application are now in a condition for allowance and favorable action thereon is requested.

Please charge any additional fees that may be required or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account Number 16-1885.

Respectfully submitted,

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